Spanish surnames. Their ancestors were also brought to Louisiana by Galvez in the late 1700s.

Domengeaux noted, however, that a bill he fostered is also before the committee on education and would aid in the promotion of second languages in public schools.

The bill “gives teeth” to the movement, he said, in that it requires school administrations to offer a foreign language if 25 per cent of the parents of the students signed a petition asking for it to be taught.

“The people have been ready for this but the administrators haven’t,” Domengeaux said. “This gives the people their rights.”

Morrison said he foresaw no trouble in passing his CODOSIL bill.

Spanish of Cervantes,” according to one New Orleans linguist, and still preserve many of their aged customs.

But the speaking of Spanish and the practice of their customs are on the decline and Morrison’s bill is intended to prevent this.

Frank Fernandez, a spokesman for the Islenos from Ys- closkey, on being informed of the bill said, “It’s terrific and I believe that we have brought to the surface a rich heritage which will bring a lot of credit to the state, especially with the (U.S.) bicentennial coming.

“The people are aware of it now and are very much concerned with preserving it.”

Fernandez, who is an educator, said he was often frustrated in his efforts to have the St. Bernard Parish School Board allow the teaching of Spanish. In the six years he was a board member, he estimates, such proposals were turned down “50 times.”

Morrison said federal monies are available for the hiring of teachers from Spain and Latin America — similar to the efforts of CODOFIL — and goodwill trade missions to Latin America and Spain are planned, as is “an attempt to identify and mark the Spanish and Latin contributions to music and lifestyles throughout the state.”

The bill calls for the inclusion of Spanish exhibits and CODOSIL offices in the renovation of the French House on the LSU campus, he said.

Morrison said the bill was prompted by an article in The Times-Picayune in early May which explored the Isleno situation. But he said he has long been cognizant of the somewhat ignored Hispanic contributions to Louisiana life.

The New Orleans attorney noted the Louisiana system of law is based primarily on the Spanish “Siete Partidas,” rather than on the Napoleonic Code — as is commonly believed — and that “the myth of the French Quarter is that it is basically French when in fact it is primarily Spanish. It should be called the Spanish Quarter.”

Morrison also said the project was needed to foster trade with Latin America, noting “the bulk of our foreign tourism comes from Latin America and Spanish dominated countries.”

The bill was also co-authored by Rep. Frani Patti of Plaquemines Parish, and St. Bernard Parish Reps. Bert Rowley and Elmer Tapper.

“It’s just sort of an embryo, now,” Morrison said, “but it will grow.

“We do want to make it clear that in no way do we intend for CODOSIL to detract from CODOFIL. We’ve consistently supported every project that they’ve been involved in and they’ve given us every indication that they support our effort.”

Domengeaux, contacted in his Lafayette office, said he had “no quarrel with that.”

He did warn, however, against “diluting our resources” directed toward preservation, and said he thought New Orleans had more interest in Spanish culture than Southwest Louisiana.

“Spanish hasn’t been spoken from New Orleans to the Texas border in 100 years,” he said.

A high percentage of Louisianians from that area have...